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THE POWER OF SIN DESTROYED.

CHRISTIANITY is a message of pardon. This is one of the directions in which the gospel expends its treasures of light and love. This is one; and there is another. Christ forgives sins, and he enables us to rise above them; and of Christianity it may be further said, "It is power; victory over unrighteousness. It is the way into a holy life."

We cherish moral aspirations; we reverence conscience as the clear, authoritative voice of God; we are not satisfied with leaving duties undone; we should be rejoiced to see the wrong in the world righted; we find little comfort in living under so dark a cloud, amidst pollution and injustice; in our humble way we would be better men and women. Now, Christianity is in the world to help us in all this, to make all this possible for us, to realize our desires, to fulfil our hopes, to answer our prayers. If we are Christians, we can be better men and women than if we are not Christians. There are plentiful measures of wisdom, motive, and inspiration in the gospel. It enriches, strengthens, emancipates human souls. It makes the timid heroic, the indolent industrious, the passionate sober.

It is righteousness, holiness, deliverance, because it makes these ours. We say confidently, — speaking from the experience of millions, souls out of every nation, souls that have wrought out the problem of life in circumstances the most various,

from the king upon the throne to the slave in his cabin, — that Jesus does evermore purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of all righteousness. We do not mean merely that all who are trying to be good and do good are Christians. Jews and Gentiles did so before Christ came. We mean that there is help in the gospel for the earnest lover of goodness, by means of which he may realize a kind and measure of success altogether peculiar, singular. We mean, that whoso would do the utmost justice to his moral nature, to his conscience, to his heart, should try to be a genuine believer in the gospel. It has a very very common-place sound, all this; it is very familiar; and yet we are sure that it is not all appreciated, and that it is matter about which there is much latent scepticism.

You would “do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly before your God.” Christianity is in the world, then, for your help; and, if you would achieve any thing worth calling success, it must be through Christ. How is this?

I. A familiarity with the gospel will, in many ways, make your moral aspiration, — this longing of your mind and heart, — settled, habitual, something more than a mood, a transient impression, a sober thought of a more thoughtful season. This is its first effect. Every one, not utterly hardened and forsaken, has moments of moral aspiration, times of conscientiousness and feeling; but we may say of the hearty Christian, that he has hardly any other moments, so mightily does the truth, as it is in Jesus, work upon his soul. He cannot turn to a page of his gospel, without reading words that feed the noble fire. He is in the presence of Goodness made flesh; speaking, acting, suffering goodness, not the thought or the imagination, but the reality. He believed before that it was one of the excellent things in life; now he sees that without it nothing is excellent. He believed before that it was very desirable to have it; now he sees that it is ruinous to be without it, — that nothing else stands between us and infinite sorrows. All that Christ spake, wrought, and endured, comes at last to feed our moral aspiration, and make all things else second to the desire for being and character. The great discourses, the simple parables, the stern reproofs, all issue in this practical application; not indirectly, not by way of inference, but by the closest possible connection. And when you see the Master upon the cross, you judge with the apostle that “he

died for all, because all were dead; and that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Jesus, who died for them and rose again," &c.; and when his rising makes the veil between this world and the world to come so thin, how solemnly does the immortality before you call upon the eternal soul within you to strive for the rewards, and to guard against the judgments, that surely follow death! Not a word does the great Teacher utter to check this moral aspiration. He gives you no creed, which you are to take pride and comfort and assurance in. He establishes no ritual, which shall be a substitute for holy living. He does not teach salvation by articles, or catechisms, or covenants, or muttered prayers. He says that belief is essential to life and peace, and that he shall measure belief by what it can do and suffer, — by the fruits of justice and love. No man can be in habitual communion with Christ, without entering deeply into his aspirations. When he rises and when he lies down, he will still be thinking of goodness, and how it can be realized. The slumber of indifference is no longer possible for him. Religion can be to him no longer a cold speculation or a pleasant fancy. He will long for something more than the figures of gospel rhetoric. He has become a hungry and thirsty soul. He would be miserable and desperate, were he not as sure that sins are forgiven, as he is sure that they need to be forgiven.

II. Again, the Master and Saviour of Christians guides, enlightens moral aspiration. Without his priceless counsels, it might become merely a vague desire for something better; an indefinite, aimless, and therefore almost unprofitable longing; very likely to waste itself in day-dreams, or solace itself with the hope of better things in a future state of being. Now, the gospel is a simple course of moral lessons: not this alone, but certainly this; and every humblest reader or hearer of the gospel has within his reach a morality which is at once perfectly plain, sublimely elevated, all-comprehending, absolute, and final. It is very desirable to understand what it is that distinguishes the morality of the gospel from all other moral teachings. Pursuing their inquiries into this subject, students of Christianity have endeavored to learn whether the great Teacher brought forward any moral precepts which could strictly be called new. The search has been prosecuted in every direction, through the works of various Gentile moralists, especially those of the extreme East and of Greece.

From various writers upon morals, gathering out of each a little, one may collect almost, if not quite, the Christian code; the great prominence given to the duty of brotherly love constituting perhaps the single exception. An exception of great moment; for so steadily is the law of love placed in the foreground, and urged as absolutely essential and distinctive, that we can well understand why the Saviour called it a new commandment. This ruling and pervading spirit of love gives a new form, color, direction, to old and familiar precepts, reversing the best established precedents, and bringing under censure practices and institutions which before were either excused or positively commended. Forgiveness and the love of enemies were extolled before Christ lived; but the spirit of mercy was not made the life and heart of any moral code, until our Lord discoursed from the mountain in Galilee. It is to be observed, again, that the gospel morality does not dispense Christians from the work of applying its principles, forming them into specific rules, and learning the special duty of the day and hour and circumstances. In the moral lessons of the New Testament, we have not, as some suppose, a set of minute rules, specific, definite, exactly adjusted to each and every circumstance of life, telling us what we must eat, wear, say; what we are to do about temperance, war, slavery, &c. This is not the case, and great harm has come of this mistaken notion, inasmuch as some have supposed the gospel to sanction what it has not specially forbidden.

In truth, Christianity directs our moral aspirations, by presenting in their completeness, and according to due proportion, the great principles of morality, which may be found perhaps, one here, and another there, scattered through the treatises of many wise men, and yet are nowhere else to be met with as a fitly harmonized whole. This is its first work; and it is a great one, and suggestive certainly of the divine origin of our faith. But the second is greater far, and carries us at once beyond the earth and humanity for its explanation. It is this: Christ, in all his moral teachings, sets forth the divinest, the most absolute principles of justice and love, the righteousness of God's kingdom itself, as practicable, possible; not as philosophic dreams, but as the laws of life, the laws of the heart, the home, the village, the city, the Commonwealth. They are to be fine sentiments no longer; they are to be lessons, which it is to be our life's business to

apply. The disciples shall be known by their earnest prosecution of this work; by their faithfulness in devising specific rules in accordance with these great principles; by their great desire to acquaint themselves with all the moral wants of the world, — wants which demand Christian remedies. Heavenly justice and love the Saviour teaches. Justice the most exact, love the most tender and comprehensive, are for you and me, for our hearts, and for our world. Circumstances beyond our reach may defer, and Christian prudence must direct, but neither indolence nor selfishness must limit, their application; and when we cease to feel earnestly, to inquire honestly, to labor diligently, to sacrifice cheerfully, for these ends, we cease to be children of the Christian kingdom, whose law is progress, whose life is growth, whose great epochs shall all be moral, until the will of God shall be done on earth as it is in heaven. Thus the gospel is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, in its *principles*, but ever fresh in its *applications*, engaging its disciples not in vain longings after new revelations, but in renewed efforts to realize and apply the old. Now it is a vast deal for "moral aspiration" to receive from the Son of God a doctrine of the kingdom within and about us, as the definite aim, the authorized standard, the new world, which we are required, and of course encouraged, to create. It makes unremitted moral effort a solemn Christian duty; it allows no pause short of absolute justice and love; it brings in a new doctrine of human and earthly possibilities; it begins ever anew; it turns the whole force of our faith into the realization of its moral principles. Of the event of all this effort, so far as to mark times and seasons, it does not speak: this would doubtless harm us; perhaps stimulating to rashness, or, it may be, lulling to sluggish composure. "Duties," says pious Cecil, "belong to us, events to God." It may be said that much is left here to our own effort. It may be thought that we have no help in the perplexing task of applying our principles. But is this so difficult a matter for any who are really imbued with them; who are not hindered by indolence and selfishness; who really wish to know what is just and kind in any given circumstances; what really ought to be done, and not what may possibly be defended or palliated? Is this so difficult where any considerable number of persons are truly in earnest? and, when it is difficult, must we not say that the mass of those

involved are not earnest and single-hearted? And shall we not gladly be at some pains to know what under any given circumstances are justice and mercy, if these are no longer abstractions, vague thoughts of mine, but revealed from heaven, as the will of the Father, which the children are to do?

III. And yet again, our Saviour Christ helps us to overcome evil by the spirit that he giveth us. The gospel must become a spirit of power and love in our hearts, before it can produce any very marked results in our lives. It re-creates first that which is within. Along with the command, it gives the heart and the will to keep it. There is an outward word, and there is also an inward grace. We are all very near to God; but who so near as they who believe in the Son of his love, the giver of his spirit? It is of course essential to know what the right is; but it is quite as essential to feel some desire, some impulse, some eagerness, to do it. Moral instruction may be followed only by disobedience. The commands of conscience do not persuade and charm and warm us into following them. Christ has many hearers, who do not the things which he says. But we *can* do right, it is said; and what if we can, if we *will* not, if we have no desire to, if the little obedience that we render is mere slave-work? How shall we ever make any progress so? Is it not a familiar experience, that the reproaches of conscience, and the sure prospect of ruin, will not prompt to the moral effort which will quiet the one, and ward off the other? Conscience is not, as some suppose, the only faculty in man through which he shall be saved. An enlightened conscience is not all that we need to ensure righteousness and peace. We are nothing without it, and our religion is but chaff; but we need something with it. Oh, how miserable a man may be with an enlightened conscience! What do I gain, though my eyes are open to see the mountains of holiness, if the gaudy flowers and the baubles under my feet have power to distract my gaze continually; if I have no longer any courage in my heart to sustain me in the effort to ascend them; if I am all unnerved, and pre-occupied, and foreclosed? You think you have done me a great benefit in showing me my duty; and so you have, if you will show me how to do it. You say that you have directed me to the truth, and that I ought to follow her; but even of this there must be some abatement: for truth ought to be of lovely aspect, and so I have *not* seen her.

Truth ought to attract followers, but I am not attracted: the good that commends itself to my conscience does not commend itself to my affections, to that heart which I obey. And so the preaching of the gospel never ends with an exposition of duties, even though this may be done from the truest Christian stand-points, and in the most elevated Christian spirit. Does any one suppose that the great reformatory movements which followed the earliest preaching of Christianity were wrought simply by showing men wherein they were doing wrong? Conscience had told them already quite as much as they cared to hear; far more than they were disposed to make use of. Wherefore should they hear it again? "How can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." That stupendous work in Jerusalem, in Ephesus, in Antioch, in Corinth, in Rome, to which the Epistles of the New Testament bear such abundant testimony, was not accomplished merely by telling men that goodness is a good thing, and that they ought to be good. That message never yet inspired any man. Each one of those converts from heathenism and vice felt an enlargement of soul, an invigoration of the whole moral being, a new moral life, a wonderful re-creation, which he could only describe as Christ within him. He had no theory about the matter, — theories are too likely to be deferred until the subject to which they are devoted is dead; but he did know and affirm, that somehow, since he had learned to confide in the words of the Messiah, he had delighted in much which once he only dreaded or even hated. The whole force of Christianity was not expended upon the conscience; it wrought mightily also in the heart; and then the heart saw to it that conscience was obeyed.

The whole effect of a genuine Christianity, — a Christianity which is not a fossil relic, but a living soul, will be to feed the fountains of a genial moral life, — a life that will easily, if not spontaneously, manifest itself in all good works, and strengthen itself by sacrifices joyfully met. How little of this life one may gain by a mere adherence to the popular Christianity of any period since the earliest days, is sadly obvious. How much of it an earnest moral nature may gain from the moralities of the gospel, without any positive faith in its supernatural communications, it is hard to say. Sure we are, however, that, for the multitude of men, it will accomplish very little as a morality, unless it is

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heartily received as a religion; unless it comes to them in the person of the Son of God; unless it brings them within the power and the blessing of that Master's heavenly Father. We do not know that it is essential to understand in what precise way Christianity works upon us to quicken and strengthen our moral affections: certainly it is not essential that we should be wise in the matter beyond what is written. But it is essential to realize that such are its effects, and that where such effects are not wrought there is no genuine Christianity. It is essential to realize that it does energize us beyond the degree of any common morality, any mere decency; and that we utterly misunderstand or misuse it, when only a creed and a ritual rear themselves, thin barriers, between a world lying in wickedness and on its way to ruin, and a church which the Lord of life redeemed from sin by his own agony and death. That only is genuine Christianity which renovates a man from his very innermost being; makes him love what Christ loved, and hate what Christ hated; engages him to labor and suffer for righteousness with a hearty enthusiasm. In every age you will find such a Christianity, and a church built upon it; not always within the orthodox and generally recognized lines, and never, in strength of numbers, proportioned to the masses of nominal Christians; and yet always a remnant, we trust, gradually increasing, and destined at last to leaven the whole lump. In some way, Christianity does increase the moral energy of the believer's soul. Whether you take it literally or in a figure, it is really, substantially true, that, wherever there is an earnest Christian, the promise has been fulfilled, "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come unto you." And if we accept the plain assurances of the gospel, that the heavenly Father fills his children with his Holy Spirit, who shall say that the Mediator through whom the gift cometh is not the Lord Jesus?

It comes at last to this, Was holy living a dreary, painful struggle to Christ? Was it not his meat and drink to do his Father's will? Now, it is not to be questioned that every faithful follower of Jesus shares in the Saviour's blessed spirit, is filled with his fulness, and enters into a measure of his glorious freedom. Warmth, tenderness, enlargement, all ministering to practical results, do characterize his true disciples. What seems more firmly rooted than the character which long years have estab-

lished? We say, in our haste, that men cannot be changed after they have reached a full maturity; that the mean man cannot part with his meanness, nor the vile with his vileness, after the evil ways have once been well trodden out, and the tracks worn deep, — that such a change would be a miracle. Be it so: Christ can work it. The tide of that divine life flows over and pours into our souls.

What advantage, then, hath the Christian? This, with much else, — this, as the great end of all, that through Christ he is able to do all things. You cherish moral aspirations; you are earnestly desirous of realizing them; you find much that is wrong in your temper and conduct; you fall sadly below the Christian standard. The gospel points you to your helper Christ; it offers you his very spirit; it bids you, in its figurative manner, eat his flesh and drink his blood; it tells you, that, unless you do this, you have no life in you. How many might have been saved from despair through a trial of the Christian way; the way of that life which is hidden with Christ in God, and baffles our science, but yet is so real to the heart, and so manifest in the renewed character!

R. E.

PICTURES FROM MEMORY.

THERE are probably few of our readers, who, during the summer that has now past, have not enjoyed the pleasure of some little excursion from home, during a longer or shorter period of time. While some have passed the greater part of the warm summer months among the noble mountain-scenery, now brought by the power of steam within a day's journey of some of our larger cities, or luxuriated in the cool breezes of the sea-shore, others less favored in outward circumstance, or confined by family cares and duties, have perhaps, only for a single day, escaped the noise and confinement of the city or town, and breathed the fresh air, and enjoyed the sweet sights and sounds, that nature, with such boundless profusion, lavishes on green fields and woods and joyous streams.

But now that summer with her rich luxuriance, and autumn with her more gorgeous tints and glowing beauty, have passed

away, and the leafless branches, the sparkling morning frost, and the solitary bird, hastening to a warmer clime, speak of winter, of cheerless skies and storms and cold, is it not well to gather up some of the treasures of the past, and to learn from them lessons of hope and trust for the future, incentives to new effort, a higher aspiration, and a more vital faith? Have not all some pictures in memory's gallery, which need to be kept fresh and bright, by letting the light of each day's remembrance shine upon them, so that, engaged in the routine of business or daily home-duties, they may allure the soul from the merely outward and transitory to thoughts of that which is enduring and eternal? Those chambers of imagery have been furnished by a more than mortal hand; and, however narrow or extended their outlines, not without a deep and holy purpose have they been presented to our view.

Have we returned to our homes with new zeal and earnestness for duty, new purposes of usefulness, a deeper love of all that is pure and beautiful in the outward world,—with more spirituality of taste and feeling, and a more conscious union with God, through the holy influences of his Spirit, ever pervading the world of life and beauty around us? Or have the months that have passed given us a distaste for all earnest exertion, strengthened our indifference to the claims of others, and only deepened our interest in the mere fashion and amusement of the hour; turning away the soul, the more surely, from its only true happiness?

As, by the magic power of memory, these pictures of the months gone by pass before us, how various, how strangely intermingled, are the scenes that one by one present themselves to our view! Scenes of joy and of sorrow, of festivity and of grief, greetings with absent friends, and partings with the pure and loved, over which faith alone has shed the light of the bow of promise,—days of gladness and sunshine and health, succeeded by the chastened light and the subdued tones of the chamber of sickness,—scenes in the outward creation, seeming, in their full life and loveliness, foreshadowings of the better land,—the rich and overflowing beauty of each bright summer's day, from the first faint flush of the early dawn, until the mellow twilight bathes the landscape in a softened beauty all its own,—succeeded by the rich hues and gorgeous tints of the autumn

woods, and the brilliant sunsets that fill the sky with a radiance too glowing and too wonderfully ethereal for earth, — the sights and sounds of beauty, that, at every step and at every season, present themselves to the observant spirit, — are not all of these pictures, in those wonderful chambers of imagery, upon which the eye may still rest for instruction and pleasure, and from which the soul may draw new strength, as from living fountains of life?

And now that the chill winds have blasted even the latest flowers, and the brown leaves are scattered over the earth, we would recall some of the thoughts associated with these living pictures, and from such remembrances seek new earnestness of spirit and a higher aspiration.

Leaving home on a warm and bright day in the early autumn, we reached, just at sunset, the beautiful lake that lies embosomed among the hills of New Hampshire, bearing still the significant Indian name, "Winnipisiogee," "the smile of the Great Spirit." It was just at that hour when —

"The shadows of the inland sea
Were deepening into night;"

and as the little boat glided quietly among the green isles, and the outlines of the hills in the distance grew more and more faint in the dim twilight, while the stars looked down upon us in their quiet beauty, with no sound to be heard but the gentle movement of the boat, — for every voice seemed hushed by the unwonted beauty and stillness of the scene, — we could hardly believe that but a few short hours separated us from the noise and bustle of the ever-busy multitude of the city. It was, indeed, good to be there; awhile to forget the world, and entering that glorious temple of nature, beneath the wide canopy of heaven, to lift the evening song of thanksgiving, and to feel as if in the visible presence of that Spirit which bathes the earth with beauty and peace.

But when the morning light broke over the scene, and the shading mists were lightly lifted from the waters, and resting for a time over the distant mountains, until, floating upwards, they were lost in the deep blue of the heavens, — a new and different beauty was diffused "o'er isle and reach and bay." Again, taking the little boat, so rightly called the "Lady of the Lake," we glided

over the smooth waters with scenes of the richest beauty unfolding at every turn. But, full as was each hour of enjoyment, the return across the lake by sunset was a scene surpassing all before witnessed of glory and beauty. The first faint shadows of evening had already skirted the eastern horizon, and the shadowy mists were slowly gathering over the green hills and distant mountains, when the rays of the sun, for a short time obscured by a passing cloud, streamed forth, and poured their dazzling radiance over mountain, isle, and lake. The whole heavens, glowing with the most gorgeous tints of crimson, gold, and amber, were reflected with such perfect beauty in the calm lake, that "*two* worlds of beauty" lay upon its placid waters. And as the boat glided quietly on, making a gentle ripple in its wake, the colors of the water became so beautifully blended, as to defy all power of description, or the most skilful touch of the artist's pencil to reproduce them. Too beautiful and too transitory for earth, silently and softly they faded into the darker hues of twilight, until the stars came forth and crowded the sky, —

"And earth and heaven were filled
With the solemn litany."

But deeply as our minds were impressed with this evening scene, none the less vividly do we recall the hour, when clouds and shadows covered the lake, and the driving mists, and the chill, damp wind, foretold the approaching rain. As, from our quiet room, we looked over the scene so changed within a few hours, it seemed to us a fitting emblem of life. So, we thought, the mists of doubt and distrust, and the shades of sorrow and trial, may gather, but with no blind and fearful power, — no unguided and reckless force; and when the eye raises its downward and earthward look, far away, — it may, indeed, be in the dim distance, — but surely and for ever the same, lie those everlasting hills from whence cometh our help.

In such a spot, if in any place within the great temple of earth, might the spirit rest satisfied with outward forms of beauty, grace, and glory; there, if anywhere, from the deep voices of nature, might the soul become conscious of its own immortality, and be assured of a life beyond the power of change and of death; there, if anywhere, might Pantheism erect its gorgeous temple, and offer its mystic sacrifice to the spirit of nature: but never

have we felt more deeply, than in communion with such scenes, the need of that higher voice that spake from Gethsemane and Calvary, of that word of pardon, strength, and assurance, by which the soul is led unto the Father. The hills and mountains, in their solemn grandeur, are silent at the soul's deep questionings; but a nobler beauty and a holier majesty crown their summits, as they remind us of those everlasting hills, from whence cometh our help, — that, "as the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about them that fear him." The placid waters, in the clear light of morning, or beneath the gorgeous hues of the autumnal sunset, cannot wash from the soul its consciousness of weakness and sin; but a holier light is reflected from each sparkling wave, as they speak to the soul of those waters, of which he who drinketh shall never thirst, as they become symbolical of that river, "the streams whereof make glad the city of our God." And when the soul feels its deep need of sympathy, and, sometimes painfully conscious of being misunderstood by others, seeks for peace and rest, no voice from deep woods or shady groves utters those soothing, peace-giving words, "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."

The very heavens become radiant with a new glory; as we remember how they were parted over the Jordan, and the baptism of the Holy One was sealed by those divine words, "This is my beloved Son." And the gathering mists, and the dark and lowering clouds, become transfused with a brighter glow, as we listen to the voice that spake amid the storm, and hushed the raging waters, saying, "Peace, be still." And deeper emotions and higher thoughts fill the soul, as we gaze on the wide amphitheatre of mountains and forests, and remember those once with us, now beholding the glories of the New Jerusalem, — the city "that hath no need of the sun or the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."

And thus consecrated by a higher faith, and beaming with a glory that fadeth not with the changing seasons, a voice ever comes through the silent halls of memory, —

"From radiant hill, and woodland dim,
And tinted sunset sea," —

speaking of a deeper faith and a holier earnestness, and bidding the soul be clothed anew in the immortal garb, in the strength of

Him who hath redeemed us through his blood, and evermore made us kings and priests unto God.

But, turning away from these scenes of nature's painting, we would pass to yet another picture, delineated, indeed, by the hand of man, but none the less calculated, in certain moods of mind, to kindle thought and excite the deepest emotion. Somewhat weary of "the trival round and common task" of daily duty, and turning aside from the noise and confusion of the crowded streets of the city, we entered the quiet gallery, where the Düsseldorf paintings are exhibited, and stood before that noble work of Lessing's, — the martyrdom of Huss. Unskilled in the mere technicalities of the art, we would make no attempt at criticism, but would simply speak of the feelings excited, and the impressions made upon our own mind, as we gazed upon that speaking canvas.

The hour represented is just before the execution, when, upon a slight eminence in the neighborhood of Constance, the steeples of which are seen in the distance, the stake is erected; and around a tree, despoiled of its branches, bundles of wood and straw are piled up, ready to be lighted by the executioners, who, bearing burning torches, are impatiently awaiting the moment when the final signal shall be given for their inhuman sacrifice. The picture itself is divided into two distinct groups; the one on the right representing the opponents of Huss, — his friends occupying the left.

The artist was right in avoiding the delineation of the horrors of the execution; for as now represented, while conscious of the final result, all thought of mere physical suffering is absorbed in the contemplation of that countenance, which speaks of a spirit already conversant with things unseen and eternal. Expressive at once of humility and faith, it pierces beyond the veil, and exclaims with the apostle of old, "I am now ready to depart; I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith. Thenceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me in that day."

Composed and serene, the spirit has already triumphed over the fearful array of physical suffering, and, kneeling in conscious humility at the foot of the cross, receives the assurance of pardon and acceptance. No vain glorying, no self-exaltation, is there expressed, but the Christian's faith, and the Christian's hope triumphant over suffering, and resting in a Saviour's redeeming

love. A light cloud sheds its radiance over the pallid countenance; and, as we gazed, we could almost see the heavens opened, and the cloud of unseen witnesses gathering around that hill of sacrifice, ready to welcome the faithful spirit, purified by the fires of martyrdom, to the crown of glory that fadeth not away.

Our own spirits were uplifted and made the better for gazing upon that scene; for we felt as if in a holy presence, as if borne awhile from the transient and perishing, unto the Mount of Transfiguration. And well would it be often to look upon a scene like this, — to gain a deeper assurance of the reality of our faith, of trust and hope in God.

And do we not need this? Do we not need to go back to those earlier times, and quicken our sluggish faith and languid piety, by something of the martyr's spirit and the martyr's faith? May we not well turn aside from our ease and luxury, and, bringing before us some of those early Christian heroes, learn that there is a power in the cross of Christ, and a spirit of self-sacrifice, of which the world takes little cognizance?

Might not our lives be made more pure, devout, and holy, by a deeper indwelling of that spirit which counts all things but loss, so that it might win souls to Christ?

Gazing with earnest thought upon that serene brow, a reverential hush came over the spirit, as we were borne in thought beyond that scene of death, to a scene of deeper agony and grief, and of a sublimer triumph. Passing from the garden of Gethsemane, we paused at Calvary's mount; and there, as the thought of life's failures and omissions pressed upon the spirit, a deeper and holier than the martyr's voice whispered of pardon and of peace, of earnestness in life, and a living hope triumphant over death.

May such a faith be ours, ever growing deeper, purer, and more fervent; and as, day by day, these chambers of imagery are filled with new and living pictures from the varied experiences of life, may we so treasure their revelations of wisdom and of truth, and so attune the inward ear to their lessons of spiritual life and of heavenly wisdom, that, when we too shall stand in conscious view of eternal realities, it may only be to feel that death is lost in victory, and mortal weakness transformed into immortal vigor and strength, by Him who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

H. M.

THE DEACON'S MEETING.

Not many weeks since, it was my hap to pass the sabbath in the vicinity of a very pleasant village, in the western part of Massachusetts.

It was a fine October day, quiet but joyful. There was a lingering breath of summer in the air; and the mild frosts, which had been sufficient to turn the forest-leaves, had spared, here and there, some ornamental tree or shrub, which still shone like an emerald in the gorgeous coronal of autumn. It was a day harmonizing well with the holy time, and inclining one, beyond his wont, to serious and devout meditation. There was, in the very air, a tranquillity that hushed the clamorous passions, a buoyancy that lifted the mind quite above the plane of common week-day cares and labors, — a language of trust even, felt if not heard, and breathing the peace of heaven itself.

Such a day invites to worship. We call to mind those immortal psalms, beginning, — “I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.” — “How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!” and others of a kindred nature; and our hearts glow with something of the inspired poet's devotion, while he describes the blessedness of those who love to frequent the house of prayer, and pay their vows in the presence of the people.

The good man, who sustained the relation of pastor to the people of the neighboring village, was one of those whose parochial life might find its counterpart in the simple and affecting narration of “The Sunny Side.” He labored with earnest effort for and among his people, bringing weekly his full measure of “beaten oil for the service of the sanctuary.” Without shining talents, or even a winning address in the pulpit, he had yet won the respect and love of those to whom he ministered. Under these circumstances, it was not without some feeling of mortification and regret that I learned there was to be no regular service that day, but only a deacon's meeting, as it was here called. This is no very rare thing, when parishes are small; for the minister must have his time for relaxation, and such parishes find

it hard to do more than pay the stipulated salary. Common as it is, however, it is, in too many instances, but a signal for the scattering of the flock. It seems to be an opinion, by no means confined either to the English or Catholic church, that the Great Shepherd cannot guide his sheep to the green pastures and still waters, except by means of the ordained preacher. I was insensibly falling into the same way of thinking; but, as I mused farther upon the matter, all my Quaker blood was roused. Has it, indeed, come to this, I asked myself, that our songs must cease, our devotions languish, and we be debarred from the promised blessing, because, in the providence of God, there is no ordained minister to pray and expound the word for us? Away with the unworthy thought! "My feet shall stand within thy gates; for there the Lord *commands* his blessing, even life for evermore." Yes, to the meeting I must go; and if it is with proper motives and affections, One is pledged to meet me there, who can speak to me words more comforting than ever fell from human lips, who can kindle in my heart a deeper glow of devotion than could touch the tongue of an archangel. As I have already said, it was early autumn. My road to the "meeting" lay within a short distance from a beautiful river, whose banks were lined with willows and maples, now dropping their leaves into the current beneath, as we sometimes do our fading earthly hopes into the stream of life, only that we may look to Heaven more clearly. On my left was a strip of meadow, crowned with the fruits of the season; and on the right a mountain, whose wooded slopes presented to the eye such a commingling of colors, so exquisitely shaded as to make the sight a very feast. A sharp angle in the descending road brought me to the passage of a narrow stream. Close at hand, but on opposite sides of the stream, stood two trees, the foliage of one vermillion red; that of the other brilliant beyond description, with golden hues. It seemed as though every leaf had imprisoned a sunbeam, and, after subjecting it to the power of its alembic, had sent it forth again in undiminished strength, but with a richer and softer radiance. Farther up the stream, the steep banks were covered with hemlocks, green as summer, whose branches interlaced, here and there, with trees of delicious foliage, and almost cheated one into the belief that these autumn signals were hanging in mid-air, without support of any kind, unless by viewless hands. Here

and there, too, might be seen, as if to give still greater variety to the display, some tall trunk, around which the Bitter Sweet had wound her scarlet wreath, and hung her orange-tinted berries.

The thought struck me, as I passed along, that all this varied beauty came directly from the hand of God. It was he, for it could be no other, who gave to every leaf its peculiar shade of coloring, disposed all in groups to please the eye, and gave to man that faculty by which he takes in and enjoys what is so freely and lovingly presented. As easily might the processes of nature have been so ordered, as that the first touch of frost should turn the whole vegetable world to the dull hue that it bears upon the verge of winter. As easily, too, might we have been so constituted, as that the perception of beauty should cause no pleasure to him who beholds it. But such is not the method of Him who delights to reveal himself as a God, not less of beauty than of love.

Another thought, suggested by my walk, was the cheerfulness with which the decaying year was passing on towards its close. The seeds of dissolution were deeply sown. The hectic flush, — sure precursor of death in nature, as in the human form, — was everywhere to be seen. The year was growing old, and soon must die; but there is no shade of grief or disappointment, or fear even. Rather did a quiet joy seem to pervade all things, — a meek spirit of trust and hope, which said, "Though I die, I shall live again."

I have, many times, towards the close of the year, been reminded by the aspect of nature, of that sentiment, uttered and recorded thousands of years ago, but still fresh in the experience of every obedient and humble heart, "All the days of my appointed time will I wait until my change come." There are days when nature seems, in this waiting attitude, so calm, silent, and submissive, though bereft of every green and budding promise; — language itself could hardly utter more distinctly her perfect resignation to the will of God. So should it be with old age. So is it, let me believe, in many instances. There are those doubtless, who, though they may walk with a more reverent and devout air, as they near the portals of eternity, yet lose none of the freshness of their vernal years, whose faith and trust grow stronger as their earthly joys decay; passing thus, by easy

and graceful steps, into that spiritual childhood, whose rising strength shall know neither pause nor end.

But I have been loitering by the way so long, I had almost forgotten the meeting. I was surprised, on entering the church, to see so large an assembly. It seemed, indeed, as large as one might reasonably expect to find collected from such a village, in the most auspicious circumstances; and it was evidently composed of those who felt it no less a privilege than a duty to assemble themselves together, on the first day of the week, for worship and instruction.

In a short time, one of the deacons — a patriarch in years — arose, and taking his place by the side of the communion-table, in a voice somewhat tremulous with age, informed the people of their pastor's absence, and that, in consequence, the services of the day would be conducted by the other officers of the church. He then began, and went through them, if not with as much of the "*suaviter in modo*" as the minister, yet doubtless with as much fervor and sincerity.

The sermon, it is true, was not fresh from the throbbing brain, and bore no savor of the midnight lamp; but it was evangelical after the strictest school, and had, at least, the good quality of an honest purpose. The choir, too, appeared to have exerted themselves to make the music more than usually attractive. In short, there seemed to be a very general effort made to sustain the usual forms of worship with devoutness and punctuality. Were this spirit manifested wherever there is a dearth of preachers, would it not be much for the enlargement of the Christian church? Would it not be more in accordance with the practice of the primitive Christians, than the state of things we find prevailing at the present time? Should we not thereby gain a greater independence on the mere outward form of devotion, together with a better experience of its true power, which would contribute to a more healthy growth of spiritual life?

The ministry should by no means be undervalued. On the contrary, every society possessed of the means should have its spiritual teacher, supported by its means, and devoting himself to the best good of those in his charge. But it should not be forgotten, that the promises of the Bible are not limited to any particular form of church-organization. Christ assured his followers, that, wherever two or three (of whatever name or deno-

mination, with or without an external organization) are met together in his name, joined to him in one spirit, there is he in the midst of them.

I think, however, there might, in many instances, be an improvement in the manner of conducting these "deacon's," or lay meetings, as I should rather call them. For example, in the devotional parts of the service, it would be far better, in most cases, to make use of a form. There may be exceptions to this; but, as a general rule, it will hold good. The advantages of such a practice are obvious. The mind is at once relieved from any apprehensions in regard to the ability of the speaker properly to conduct the performance. One is sure there will be no hesitating or blundering. Then again, as it is by language only that we can properly express our thoughts, it is fit, that, in our address to the Supreme, such only should be used as is of the purest and most elevating kind. But then, there are comparatively few uneducated persons, who, in extempore prayer, can so select their language as to produce the best effect, in leading the devotions of a promiscuous assembly. There may be feeling enough; but, unless it finds a proper expression, it fails to affect us as it ought. It is not alone the various moods of faith, hope, trust, penitence, and adoration, found in the writers of the Psalms, that have rendered them the text-book of devotion for all ages; but it is, that all these different states of mind are expressed in language the most appropriate to the occasion, alternately transporting us almost to the very presence-chamber of the Eternal, or sinking us in the dust before his awful purity. Let, then, a form be used, in the absence of the pastor. In this way, there will be nothing to shock the feelings, or provoke ridicule.

I would suggest but one other improvement in the management of these meetings; and that is in regard to sermons. Let them not be selected from some old "body of divinity," of the last century. These are excellent in their place, and that is in the library of the student. As helps in the ministerial profession, they are, doubtless, valuable; but their thought needs to be new-moulded, that it may receive the impress of the age. Sermons, whether read or preached, should possess three qualities,—evangelical fervor, literary merit, and timely adaptation.

E. N. N.

BERTHA'S CHRISTMAS VISION.

It was the night before Christmas. Snow was falling without, and the wind dashed the cold flakes in eddy whirls into the faces of those wayfarers whom business or pleasure detained in the streets. They drew their warm garments more closely about them, and hurried onward, little heeding the pelting of the storm; while the vision of a bright hearth and a cheerful home danced before their eyes, and warmed their hearts. Merry St. Nicholas, the patron saint of children, was abroad. It was a busy night with him. Thousands of parcels must be made up, and showered down as many chimneys, into expectant stockings, before the morrow's dawn. So he gave the reins to his coursers, and sped swiftly along—

"Through forest and brake,
Through deep drifting snow, over river and lake;
Over hill, over dale, where the keen northern blast
With fierce angry moaning drives fearfully past."

In a large and pleasant room sat little Bertha, gazing thoughtfully into the fire. The fire crackled and burnt, and shadows cast by its flickering light danced on the wall. But little Bertha's thoughts were far away, and she heeded them not. For many weeks she had been looking forward to this very night, and now she was trying to conjecture what gifts good St. Nicholas had in store for her. At length she grew tired of conjecture, and, taking a lamp from the table, went up to bed.

It was a neat little chamber, and the counterpane on Bertha's bed rivalled in whiteness the falling snow without. Bertha looked out of the window, against the panes of which the snow was beating noisily.

"It is a very stormy night," thought she; "St. Nicholas will have a cold time of it. What if he should not come at all?"

Bertha's apprehensions were soon dispelled; for, as she looked out, the sound of silvery bells came nearer and nearer, till at length it paused under her window, and a moment afterwards was heard in an opposite direction. Bertha rubbed her eyes, and strove to discover the sleigh from which the sound proceeded; but she could distinguish nothing.

"Can it be St. Nicholas?" murmured Bertha softly.

Even as she spoke, mingling with the sound of the retreating bells, she thought she could distinguish the words of a song. She listened attentively, and these were the words which the wind bore to her:—

"The path I have chosen
Is covered with snow,
The streams are all frozen,
Yet onward I go.

I glide o'er the mountain,
And skim o'er the lea,
I pass by the fountain,
Yet no eye can see—

My form or my shadow,
On snow-drift or mound,
On hill-top or meadow,
Or frost-spangled ground.

While sleigh-bells are ringing
Upon the highway,
And glad parties singing,
So thoughtless and gay,—

I pass through and over
Each hamlet and hall,
Ere mortals discover
Who gave them a call.

I pause but to count o'er
The gifts for each one,
And then quickly mount o'er
The sill—I am gone." *

"That must certainly be St. Nicholas," thought Bertha.

So she carefully hung up her stockings before the fireplace, and went to bed. She soon became tired of waiting for Santa Claus to come, and in a few minutes she was asleep. But the thoughts of Christmas had taken fast hold of her mind, and, as she slept, shaped themselves into the following dream.

She thought that, as she was lying awake in her chamber, there suddenly appeared before her three figures clad in white. Slowly they advanced, hand in hand, till they stood before her bedside. Then with united voices they chanted the following lines:—

* The song here attributed to Santa Claus is from the pen of J. L. Fenton.

Maiden, from the fields of air
 We have winged our rapid flight,
 Bringing gifts both rich and rare
 On this frosty Christmas-night.
 Guard them ever : they shall be
 Of exceeding worth to thee.

They ceased, and Bertha, in great astonishment, inquired,—
 “What ! are you St. Nicholas ? or,” she added, recollecting
 herself, “perhaps you are his sisters.”

The visitors resumed their chaunt:—

Maiden, no ! Thy Christmas saint
 Beareth gifts of mortal taint :
 At the touch of sure decay,
 They shall vanish quite away.
 Those we bring are not of earth,
 Theirs has been a higher birth.

Again they paused ; and one of the three, leaving her companions, came forward, and placed her hand softly in that of the wondering maiden. With her eyes directed upwards, she commenced slowly and solemnly the following chant:—

I am Faith. To thee I bear
 Childlike trust and confidence
 In the ever-watchful care
 Of our Father's providence.
 Maiden, one of sisters three,
 This the gift I bring to thee.

Faith drew back ; and the second sister came forward, and, taking her place at Bertha's side, repeated in a cheerful voice the following lines :—

I am Hope. When darksome clouds
 Gather round thy earthly way,
 And Misfortune's shadowy veil
 Intercepts the light of day,
 I will come on wings of light ;
 Clouds and mist shall straightway fly,
 And reveal the golden gates
 Of a happier home on high.
 Maiden, one of sisters three,
 This the gift I bring to thee.

Smiling graciously on Bertha, Hope withdrew, and the last of the three sisters came forward, and sang in turn :—

I am Charity. Let me
 Ever on thy steps attend,
 And, as long as life shall last,
 Be thy counsellor and friend.
 In thy bosom I would sow
 Seeds of gentleness and love,
 And, a resident of earth,
 Fit thee for a home above.
 Maiden, last of sisters three,
 This the gift I bring to thee.

Again the sisters joined hands, and with united voices sang, as at first:—

Maiden, from the fields of air
 We have winged our rapid flight,
 Bringing gifts both rich and rare
 On this frosty Christmas night.
 Earthly maiden, sisters three,
 Faith and Hope and Charity,
 These the gifts we bring to thee.

Their voices died away upon the still air, and they were gone. Bertha opened her eyes, and, lo! it was all a dream that had come to her on this Christmas-night. The morning sun was shining brightly through the window-panes. Noisily over the frozen snow dashed the sleighs, and their bells rang a merry peal in honor of Christmas-day. Bertha glanced at the well-filled stockings that hung in front of the fire-place, and she knew that St. Nicholas had been there with his budget of gifts. And the words chanted by the sisters came into her mind:—

Maiden, no! Thy Christmas saint
 Beareth gifts of mortal taint:
 Those we bear are not of earth,
 Theirs has been a higher birth.

"I will treasure the gifts of the good sisters," murmured Bertha softly: "doubtless it is my heavenly Father who has sent them to me."

So it was that little Bertha, attended by the three sisters, walked peacefully and happily through life. The ways of God's Providence, so dark and mysterious to many, became plain and clear to her; for she saw with the eye of Faith. Clouds sometimes gathered about her path; but Hope waved her magic wand, and they were at once dispelled. Jealousy and envy, and angry thoughts, disturbed her not; for her heart was filled with the heavenly spirit of Charity.

Would that we might all be blessed with Bertha's Christmas Vision!

H. A. JUN.

MOURNING DAYS.

A SERMON, BY REV. N. L. PROTHINGHAM, D.D.

DEUT. xxxiv. 8: "And the children of Israel wept for Moses, in the plains of Moab, thirty days: so the days of weeping and mourning for Moses were ended."

IF there was ever a man whose death should have been a perpetual subject of lamentation, an unfailing fountain of tears, it was surely this man. Moses, the heaven-sent, the father of his people, their deliverer from political bondage and from the service of idols, their guide to the promised land, and their guide to knowledge and righteousness, — Moses, the lawgiver, the bard, the prophet, the wonder-worker, — was laid in the hollow valley at the foot of Mount Nebo; his rod fallen from his hand, and night settled down upon the eyes that age had been unable to dim. Who could do more for a nation? He had created it. He had taken it out of Egypt, that "iron furnace," and cast it into such a wonderful shape, that the world was to behold it from its furthest ends, and be impressed by it to the end of time. Who was there to take his place? who ever could do for the tribes as he had done? A heavenly light had gone out in him. A heavenly support was broken. He was more than a king among them, though without state. He was more than a father, for his tender concern embraced the smallest interests of the poorest man that dwelt under their tents. There is a famous statue of him in one of the Roman churches; a wonder even among the works of one of the master-minds of the world: but its gigantic features have an expression too wild and stern for him, who was meek with all his power, — who enjoined the minutest laws of kindness for the enslaved and impoverished and afflicted, and who expired in blessing the whole congregation of the children of Israel. He had directed, supported, encouraged them. He had penetrated every part of their lives and thoughts with his great spirit. And now he was no more. They were no longer to hear the voice that had spoken to them instead of God. They were no longer to see the face that had shone with a more than human splendor upon them, so that he had to veil it. How should they ever recover from his loss? Should he not remain among their mournful recollections a subject of regret for ever?

There was an immense funeral assembly in the plains of Moab. It may be that there was never one so crowded, before or since. It was no procession, however lengthened, but a swarming multitude. It was gathered in no selected spot, but spread away beyond the reach of sight over the measureless extent of the level country. The twelve tribes of Israel were bewailing, as one man, their departed chief. "They wept," — the simple language of the account runs, — "they wept for Moses thirty days: so the days of weeping and mourning for Moses were ended." It strikes me that there is something instructive as well as affecting in those plain expressions. Thirty days, and no more, for him who had been every thing to his people through those forty years! Why should it have been otherwise? And "so they ended"! How could it have been otherwise? Would you have had those hosts linger for ever where they had laid him down, and remain absorbed in their sorrow? That would have been contrary to his wish, and false to their whole duty, and by every law of nature and their condition impossible. They must give way but for a season to their grief, and then go courageously and cheerfully forward. Joshua was at their head. Their great enterprise lay before them. The Jordan was to be crossed. The Canaanite was to be dispossessed. The important future was to be provided for, when the laws that were framed in the wilderness should be observed in cities and flourishing villages by a cultivated race; when prophets should sing of ages of glory yet far distant from their own; when Mount Zion should be crowned with its sacred towers, and send its name down as a sign of praise after those towers had become dust; when the royal David should harp for the worship of the world, and the "Son of David" should give a faith for the hearts of all men. Let them set on, then, those children of destiny! The thirty days are enough for unavailing tears. There is work for them to do. There is a blessing for them to inherit. Let their step be as firm as ever, and their eye as bright; and let the music of their march ring cheerfully to the valleys and the rocks. "The Most High is still in the midst of them, and the God of Jacob their refuge." They will never, indeed, forget their chief. But he will live in their memory, not under the form of a melancholy regret, but as an object of veneration and thankfulness; not as a depressing thought, but an inspiring one; not as a dead man, at whose grave — if they could find it, for God had buried him —

they must sit in tears: how should that be? why should that be? But he will be remembered, rather as a gift that had been bestowed for good, and withdrawn no less for good; as a heavenly minister that had fulfilled his office, and passed on.

This account would not have been dwelt on so long, if it had been the mere rehearsal and dressing out of a scene from the world's elder history. Unless I greatly deceive myself, it has already assumed in your eyes a very different importance. You have seen its bearing upon present bereavements and distresses. You have caught a glimpse of the manner in which it illustrates the duties of mourners; the wisdom of the Eternal Providence in its dealings with its mortal offspring; the just measures of wailing for what God has here done with, and we have lost, and no bitter showers could revive, even if that were best; and the holy demands of nature upon the minds and exertions of them that are left alive. Every part of the description that has been given, — unless the preacher has badly pointed it, — carries a lesson that all of us may apply to the circumstances by which our own lot is surrounded.

“The days of weeping and mourning” do rightfully end. Let the occasion for them be what it will, it is but an occasion. Count them upon whatever scale you will, they are not to be interminable. It is ordained that they shall come, and that they shall cease. They should not be uselessly multiplied. They should not be gloomily and by a sort of superstition prolonged. We should think more affectionately of the goodness of God's disposing hand; more profoundly of the wisdom by which our lives and generations are ruled as they flow; and more heartily and earnestly of the obligations that always call upon us, and of the blessings that always remain. A state of being, with such conditions attached to it as ours has, must pass through many and sometimes rapid changes. No one of them is permitted to absorb us wholly, or to occupy us always. There must be a succession of feelings and fortunes. It is a child's thought that what he likes he would keep, and keep just so, for ever; and it is a similar error of the child larger grown, that he must bemoan any calamity for ever, and preserve it distinct and fresh without end. The human countenance must often change before it is stamped with the fixed seal of its fate. Joy and sadness must take their turns to pass over it. Perpetual trouble, unless through our own fault

and perverseness, would be like an iron cloud; which is a thing unknown to nature. The mind must survey under different aspects a rolling world. Perils vanish. Hurts heal. Injuries are forgotten. Losses are compensated. Disasters are overcome. Our outward condition often reveals strange vicissitudes, that would hardly have been believed if they had been told us; and our inward condition, which is our most real one, seems to be built of alternate afflictions and mercies. The Italians have a proverb:

“Hard to hard laid,
No wall is made.” *

The proverb is true in this sense, as well as others, that every life is constructed of dissimilar materials, — the soft as well as the unyielding. None is so hard but that alleviations and comforts are interposed between its sternest parts.

“To every thing there is a season,” said the wise king; and he was wise when he said it; — “a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to get, and a time to lose; a time to weep, and a time to laugh.” The other of them shall be, as surely as any of them is. With our limited views and passionate apprehensions, we take in but one side of these alternatives at once. Graciously ordered for us has it been that it is so. Joy would not be joy, if it must anticipate its own clouding. Let it be thoroughly glad, that it may be grateful. Grief would not be grief, if it contemplated pleasures to come, and numbered all its dark moments. Let it be earnest, — nay, vehement, — while its just season lasts, that it may sober and purify the soul. Let them be kept suitably apart, the experiences and emotions which are intended to be successive; so shall each fulfil its appointed work. Why should we make our happiness anxious, by predicting its overthrow? Or why should we make our sorrow selfish and unholy, by calculating how soon it may find pleasant substitutes, or sob itself into repose? Yet God, in his good providence, will bring about the transitions which, of whatever kind they are, we should neither be eager to antedate, nor obstinate to resist. Yield to the affliction that cannot be averted, and accept the consolation when it is sent.

There is many an event, familiar to our recollection; and many a household scene, of which we have all been witnesses, that cannot but occur to us in illustration of what I have now said. So

* “Duro a duro
Non fece muro.”

that we need not go so far back as the burial of the Hebrew law-giver for an example, though that is a most striking and instructive one. Many of you, when boys, have followed the muffled drum, as, with slow step and reversed arms and a military dirge, a company of soldiers were bearing one of their comrades to the grave. You were deeply impressed with the solemn music and the whole melancholy pageantry of death. You heard them "discharge their farewell shot" over the place where they laid him; and, after a few moments more, the same men returned at a quick pace and to an animated air, as if on their way to a festival. You may have thought the change too sudden and violent. I have thought so too. Not wholly without reason has the sprightliness of the return appeared to follow too close on the sadness of the funeral procession. And yet could it well have been otherwise? That whole solemnity was but a symbol of the human heart, paying its offices of affection and honor and mourning, and then betaking itself with alacrity to the beat of its customary service. The only difficulty was, that so great an exhibition had to be crowded into so small a space, and that a little hour was obliged to present a full image of our wondrous life. — You have seen the sympathizing friend, overborne by his neighbor's calamity, and entering into his feelings till he made them his own. You have seen him presently afterward restored to his natural spirits, and to a cheerful circle, happy as any one there, and leaving all those distressful emotions behind him. If you are just, or have studied with any fidelity what is in man, you will not suppose that there was any hypocrisy when he was sorrowful, or any levity when he was glad. You will allow rather that he was exercising a true sensibility, and that he presented in a natural shape the spirit that it is good to be of. — You have seen a bereaved house. Its chief pillar had sunk, or one of its loveliest ornaments had dropped away. It was a dwelling where no sound was heard but the whisper of dejection, or the cry of a stricken heart. You saw it again, when the "thirty days" of weeping had become as many months perhaps, and the home, though altered, was bright. God had been merciful to the mourners. Though there could not be restoration, there has been relief. The anguish went over. The desolate prospect got bloom upon it again. There are objects of loving interest still, and dear promises of good.

The text suggests further a short train of reflections, so simple that it will only be necessary to point at them, and leave them with your hearts. "The days of weeping and mourning" are never "ended." They will have their occasions to return. We may think that we have put them to a great distance from us, when some wound has closed up, or some threatened blow has been happily escaped; but whether we have or not, it is not for us to ordain or foretell. Other sorrows will gather after the former are dissipated. New sources of bitterness, like that at Marah in the desert, will spring up when it pleases God. And then it must be admitted, there are single griefs, that, without any repetition of their causes, will always have their season to smart. They are kept from sight by social considerations and the proprieties of the world, but often retire to ache in secret. They are forgotten amidst every-day occupations, the duties that must not be neglected, and the enjoyments that ought not to be despised; but yet perpetuate themselves by intervals through the remainder of our years. Let such be held sacred; not, indeed, cherished with an obstinate infirmity; not made a habit and a virtue of, as if by a love of self-tormenting; but so kept that earthly expectation may be sobered, and a heavenly faith nursed, and a temple of love and honor hallowed in our memories for those whom we shall behold no more.

Again, the days of "weeping and mourning" will certainly be ended. By provisions made for us in our constitution and in our lot, sorrow parts with its poignancy, deprivations become supportable, burdens grow lighter or drop, and sad events are buried up in the multitude of after-fortunes. Why should we contravene such arrangements of mercy? Why should we insist on being wretched? Why should we not receive gratefully all the alleviations and substitutes which the course of a kind Providence affords? Many destroy themselves by a sickly perseverance, and so "the sorrow of this world worketh death." Let every sufferer take heed that his suffering do not take the temper of resentment or sullenness or despair, and in that way have a poisoned sting with it, which God never planted and Christ forbids. The apostle was speaking of no "light affliction," though in his devotedness he called it so, when he said that it was "but for a moment." But for a moment was it, when compared with the long reward, which is as sure to crown a patient endur-

ance as a faithful endeavor. "But for a moment," when compared with those eras of a well-sustained mind, that have a sort of perpetuity in themselves, and are not reckoned upon meridians and from sun to sun. "But for a moment," when we contemplate that eternal state, for which all temporal fortunes should make us ready. The Scriptures bid us look forward to a time when sighing and sadness shall have flown away, when there shall be no more tribulation or death. Let us obey such a divine bidding. Let us wait for its fulfilment,

"And look till the sorrows of man are by,
And all is love and harmony."

I see an infinitely greater crowd than that which wept out its thirty days in the plains of Moab. It is composed, not of the tribes of Israel, but of all the tribes of the earth. An innumerable host! More than could now stand upon the globe, to which they have entrusted their ashes. The seer of the Apocalypse could only describe it as "ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands." They are not there to weep, for all tears have been long wiped away. They have not come to bury a benefactor, but to rejoice in him who "was dead; but, behold! he liveth for ever and ever." Instead of the sweat of anxious toil, and the wear of trouble, and the throb of pain, and the bending down of weary thoughts, and the furrows of time, and the gray locks that were whitened too soon, — there are crowns of unfading joy upon their heads.

The above Discourse was preached as a sort of "Month's Mind," after the decease of DANIEL WEBSTER, the most distinguished man in the United States; the expositor and champion of their Constitution; the pacificator of their frontiers; the leading advocate of their Union; the most illustrious representative of their greatness; the rebuker of foreign tyrants, and the glory of his own wide home of States. His life had been a crowded one from the beginning; full of activity and resolve and devotedness and ambition and honor, and the largest services. His death-bed bore witness to a power that infinitely transcended his own, — the power of religious truth and the believer's immortality.

"TIS SWEET TO DIE."

'Tis sweet to live, but sweeter still to die ;
For death is birth, — is life, — is liberty :
Death to the faithful is a welcome home,
Death is the Father's call, — "Come hither, come."

Thou mother, wake not, for thy dimpled one,
A sigh of grief, a murmur, or a moan ;
How sweet to die, ere yet a single stain
Had marked the soul God gave, — and took again !

Blest the return to God in childhood's hour,
A budding hope, a freshly opened flower :
"Oh, let me go !" I hear the loved one say ;
"Lift me from twilight to the perfect day !"

Rare genius, putting eagle-plumage on,
Bears youth's rich promise upward, and is gone.
Say not he died too early. Say, "'Twas meet
So to please God, and hasten to his feet."

'Tis good to die in manhood's earnest hour ;
To die, — to live ; to feel immortal power
Flow through the man, translate, transfigure him,
Without one hope deferred, — one palsied limb.

In age's autumn-hour, 'tis sweet to die,
As the full corn to earth bends lovingly :
Let the old warrior put his armor off,
To wear an angel-robe, an angel-staff.

O Death ! "God's Reaper," with the sickle keen,
Reap the ripe grain, and "flowers that bloom between !"
Since, from bald age to silken infancy,
The hour is ever good in which to die.

C. H. A. D.

CHRIST'S ADVENT, A LESSON OF GOOD DEEDS.

ALTHOUGH the season has passed, in which the whole Christian world seem particularly interested in the commemoration of those events which brought life and immortality to light, yet the study of Christ's character is never unseasonable; and it may not be inappropriate to call up the subject in a few remarks peculiarly adapted to this special purpose.

The birth, crucifixion, and resurrection of Christ constitute the most important events developed in sacred or profane history. And these events manifest in a peculiar degree the providences of God, in the protection and love bestowed upon his people; for they fully established a covenant between him and his children, a bond of lasting or continuing indemnity, the fruits of which promised the redemption of the soul from sin to everlasting life. It is sad to reflect, that there are some, and perhaps many, in this enlightened age of the world and in our own community, who disbelieve, or affect at least to disbelieve, the scriptural records concerning our blessed Saviour. With as much propriety they may doubt the existence of the planetary system, — those wonderful and glittering orbs that illumine and decorate the heavenly canopy.

All could not hear the voice of Christ, to catch the holy teachings issuing from his lips. All could not behold the wonderful miracles, the work of his powerful hands. All could not see the extended hand, that raised from the cold embrace of death the gentle maiden in her pure white shroud. Yet thousands of open eyes did behold these performances, and beheld also, upon the fatal cross, his deep convulsive throes. Thousands of listening ears did hear the bitter groanings of the expiring Saviour. And some there were, bowed to the very dust with poignant grief, whose pitying hearts deeply sympathized in his agonies.

The promises of God, through the voice of the prophets, how wonderfully have they been fulfilled! The voice of Micah announced to the world sweet consolation for believing hearts. And it came in words which inspiration placed upon his tongue:

"But thou, Bethlehem, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me, that is to be ruler in Israel." And, as predicted, the peaceful ruler, the holy counsellor, the mighty sovereign, came to fill the measure of his Father's glory, — came the Christian ruler, the meek and lowly messenger of *Peace*.

Yes, peaceful was the advent of our Saviour. At his approach, no loud huzzas re-echoed through the air. No sycophantic lips cried Hail. Feeble and unadorned the holy Saviour came, — the world's best Sovereign, God's best beloved! He came, the conqueror of sin and death, strewing upon this dark and degenerate earth the light of the gospel and the balm of peace, bringing to mankind good-will. His mission here was to reverse the "implement of war," that man no longer might slay his brother; to light the avenues of this dark world, that those who walked therein might no more stumble; to open doors of everlasting life, that those who chose might make their entrance there; to purify the heart of man, that he no longer might cling to his own infirmities; to draw our minds to true and faithful worship, and establish a living witness of his mercy to those who believe in his name and walk in the ordinances of his love.

Passing from the advent to the departure, the crucifixion of Christ must have produced wonderful excitement in the minds of the beholders. With what bewilderment must the spectators have been filled when viewing this awful catastrophe! For the material world seemed now disjointed and rebellious. The earth relaxed its gravity, and trembled in its course. The very rocks, upheaving from their bases, scattered their fragments, broadcast over the land. Yes, this awe-struck multitude were spell-bound in their fears. Some, with deep contrition in their hearts, were ready to confess that this man truly was the Son of God. Others, as over their darkened souls this gloomy prospect was delineated, were overwhelmed in consternation and despair.

Had the career of Christ but terminated here, ignorance would have still pervaded our wretched dwellings, and Christianity would have slumbered on the tomb of time. But the end was not yet. The purposes of the Almighty were yet to be accomplished. There was yet to come a bright and glorious day, — a day foretold by Christ himself, — a day on which the Holy One of Israel should leave the confines of his earthly sepulchre,

uncorrupted by its influence, bringing life and immortality to light. It was the day of his resurrection.

The resurrection of Christ must have seemed an act of enchantment in the eyes of that astonished community, who beheld the empty sepulchre, — the wonderful and glorious change. How beautifully dawned the soft, gray twilight of this eventful day! the day that ushered forth the splendor of salvation! Beautiful indeed were the illuminated heavens when the sun of righteousness arose, with healing in his wings, displaying the mighty power of God. For through Christ, his beloved Son, the exalted and adored Saviour, was to be the accomplishment of the perfection of man, by regeneration of heart and redemption from sin.

It was the angel presiding at the sepulchre, to whose heavenly care was committed the body of the slumbering Jesus, whose voice first announced to the sorrowful seekers of their betrayed Master, "He is not here, but is risen." And these glad tidings of great joy were wafted on the wings of the morning to Galilee; and from thence were spread, and are still spreading, to the uttermost parts of the inhabited globe. How great was the joy of believers in Jesus! In Galilee songs of gratitude ascended to the heavens, in echoes of thousands of voices; while from the joyful multitude, overburdened with a sense of God's infinite mercy, upsprung the exclamation, "Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept."

The resurrection of Christ was the fulfilment of the promise of God to his children, and the completion of his earthly mission established by the Father. And, after blessing his disciples, and teaching them to observe all things whatsoever he had commanded them, in a cloud of glory he was translated to heaven, being made perfect through suffering.

In the character of Christ what a study is offered! How diligently should we consider its beautiful features! His every quality is before us, portrayed in the writings of the evangelists. His image, pictured as it is in such vividness of coloring, is too life-like to be misunderstood. Although the mercy of God surpasses knowledge, the daily manifestations of it should be thankfully confessed. Though the meekness of Christ is scarcely to be attained by the children of this world, we should draw as largely as possible upon that ever-springing fount, that it may subdue our passions, lessen our pride, and soften the asperities of

our natures. The example of Christ, so admirably set before us, of doing good to mankind, should not be disregarded, or lost upon us. It is not pretended that we can accomplish a tithe of the good performed by him; yet it is nevertheless enjoined upon us, as far as ability and means allow. Much suffering is experienced in this world. Disease shatters our bodies. Poverty hedges us as with barriers, shuts up the avenues to sustenance, and drives its victims to despair. Sorrow wastes our frames. Oppression chains us to his horrid car. But what can we do for relief? *Much*. Although it is not permitted us to say to the sick, "Take up thy bed and walk," we can say, "From the example of Christ there is solace for thy troubled mind." To the poor and destitute, we *can* say, "Arise and be comforted." To the sorrowful, we can offer consolation. To the oppressed, we can stretch the strong and helping hand. Thus, in our feeble capacity, we may sometimes make ourselves strong. Many things can be accomplished to alleviate the miseries of our fellow-mortals. But, to do it effectually, our feelings must be rightly disposed; our inclinations properly and constantly trained.

The worthy poor are objects of commiseration. It was to commend them to the attention of the rich, and to call from them their deep considerations, that Christ declared, "The poor you have always with you." Poverty is not occasional: if it were so, this declaration would have been spared. The sound of *poverty, poverty*, is continually ringing in our ears, not so much like the mariner's alarm-bell, to warn from danger, as to arouse us from our slumbers and draw our attention to the abodes of wretchedness. Attention to the necessitous is made the bounden duty of those, who, through auspicious circumstances, have gathered into garners abundantly. Let us not forget how important it is to let our light so shine before men, that they may see our good works.

The Scriptures testify of God and his beloved Son; and, to know them aright, the Scriptures must be diligently read. We shall therein find set forth the unbounded love of God, and the glorious sacrifice of his Son; and to this end, that all who believe in the name of the Saviour shall inherit eternal life.

The sermon of Christ upon the Mount is a compendium of our obligations to our fellow-mortals, and the platform and bulwark of our holy religion. Within this sublime and beautiful

discourse are recorded, in illuminated characters, the whole duty of man, the doctrines of peace, humility, benevolence, and all the qualities that adorn the Christian. And, if rightly and feelingly comprehended, these teachings will become as a chart for the soul; designating not only the strait and narrow way, to be closely followed, but the broad, to be avoided. Having distinguished the right path, we should endeavor to walk always therein, letting our light so shine as to convince beholders that we have no other master than Christ. If we succeed in this, our last days will be our best. And when death shall enter our dwellings to demand a victim for the grave, we shall be assured that he is accompanied by the Angel of Mercy, whose whispers will add to the summons, "*Thy sins also are forgiven thee.*"

C. H.

 MY COMPASS.

THOU art my North, O my Almighty Friend!
 To thee would point my wayward, sinful soul:
 Wilt thou attract me till life's latest end,
 True as the needle to the northern pole?

Thou art my East, — in thee my being dawned;
 From thee first came the breath that warms this clay;
 My birth divine, in this my early morn,
 Keep thou before me, thou eternal Day!

Thou art my South, — when gentle breezes blow,
 And all looks bright and prosperous to my sight,
 Help me in thee a Father kind to know,
 To use these blessings and improve aright.

Thou art my West, — in thee may I recline,
 When I have done with all things here below;
 Above, a lesser star with brighter shine,
 And never more from thy blest presence go.

H.

"I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE."

WHEN we allow ourselves to think of this and the future life, we exclaim, "Mystery of mysteries, all is mystery." Birth is a mystery; life is a mystery; death is a mystery; resurrection and ascension are both mysteries; and these facts would, of necessity, be insupportable, were it not for the words of our text, "I am the Resurrection and the Life." These words were uttered upon an interesting occasion. Jesus meets Martha, who informs her Master of the death of Lazarus, and adds, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother would not have died." Martha displays, in this exclamation, a partial faith. She deems it necessary that Christ should be bodily present to give life and health, and to prevent death; she did not conceive that Christ had power to reanimate a person already dead. Jesus, to prove her spirituality, answers her in a spiritual way, "I am the resurrection and the life: whosoever believeth in me, though he were dead yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." Perceiving that Martha believes in a spiritual resurrection, our Saviour proceeds to give her double proof of it by a bodily resurrection; and the fact of immortality, through Christ, is clearly deduced from this impressive scene.

I therefore ask your attention to two topics. What should be the Christian's view of death? and what should be the Christian's view of everlasting life?

Our views of dissolution are very much affected by our education! If in infancy and youth our imagination has been distorted and wrenched by ghost-stories, our conceptions of death are any thing but agreeable. We pass grave-yards with horror, tremble at funeral processions, and sedulously avoid coming in contact with a dead body; darkness frights us, and we dread to be left alone lest spectres rise to torment us. I think I do not exaggerate in these statements. Many, by far too many, good people otherwise, on account of early impressions, fear death, and recoil from any thing that suggests it; dislike to talk about it, and view it as the greatest of evils entailed upon humanity. Such feelings are Jewish; they savor of disbelief; they can only

be removed by a right conception of the question, How is Jesus the resurrection and the life? He is so,—

1. By teaching saving truths;
2. By proving their efficacy in his life;
3. By his own crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension, thereby proving incontestably that Christianity is conqueror over the grave; and that, since Jesus has risen, man will not be utterly destroyed.

The truths advanced by our Saviour are such as our short life can but partially develop, and which nothing but the bursting of fleshy bonds can truly perfect and really enforce. Why, then, hesitate to yield up the body that the soul may be enlarged; that conceptions of Infinite Providence, Power, and Love may be realized? What are a few paltry years added to the body, in comparison with an eternity wherein the soul may revel in ever-fresh delight, and drink in new truths every moment of its existence? In heaven, love is fully and clearly understood; and we break from our affections here, only to understand what true affection is. In heaven, intelligence is rendered gorgeous by its mightiness, and we give up worldly appreciation only to amass gigantic powers for mental usefulness in a spirit-land. All the virtues find in heaven the sun-light of Almighty Wisdom, in which they may grow and develop; constantly attaining, never ceasing to gain. Why, then, hesitate to leave a world so partial, so confined, so subjected to bonds, so mysterious, and so perplexingly mysterious, involving us in Gordian knots never to be untied by human wisdom? why hesitate to leave such a world, and to obtain a full flood of light in the Father's mansions?

If we firmly believe the truths taught by Jesus, we cannot dread death. As our bodies grow weaker, so shall our faith increase; and our love of God shall crucify all discontent, all earth-born repinings. Oh! what is death to one full of Christianity? It is nothing to be feared; it is rather a blessing than a curse; for it is the gate to the truest life.

In a book, lately published, upon easy death, which is conducted after the manner of a dialogue, Aubin says to his Uncle Marham, "I shall die soon. The hand of God is on me. My feelings are not much changed perhaps; but they are stronger than what they were, I think. Now, every man I part from is a soul to be met again; and every face I see is what will be

bright with the light of heaven sometime, and in my sight. What, then, is death? It will be a concealment of me from the world, but not a hiding of the world from me. Always there will be something of me lasting on in the world; and to the end of it, the world will be known to me in some things, I think. Yes, it certainly will be. What is it, then, to die? It is not to be estranged from life utterly. Oh, no! For it is to be taken into the bosom of the Father, and to feel his feelings for this world, and to look back upon it from under the light of his eyes. Death is this, and it is beauty and it is peace."

The young man who uttered these words, had imbibed the true spirit of Christ. Such a spirit should permeate us all; and we should view death but as a retiring to rest, to awake in the morning of true glory.

The truths of Jesus derive the most of their effect from the fact of their being radiated in his life. He said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God;" and he was all purity. He said, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth;" and he was the pattern of meekness and forbearance. He said, "Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God;" and he was a radiant orb of peace, calming every passion within the range of its attraction.

The life of Jesus! Oh! let us cling to that as the very buttress to his teachings. If he were merely a philosopher, who could invent splendid theories of life, why should he be revered more than Socrates? or what right had he to call himself the Son of God? or why was there a voice from heaven at the river Jordan, and on the top of the Mount of Transfiguration, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"? Oh! it is his life that electrifies the teachings, and that life is the very life of life. It is a beautiful truth, that Jesus, proving the divinity of his doctrines by obeying them himself, has removed in a great measure the dread of death; for his teachings and his deeds all resulted from a comprehensive vision of everlasting life. If his kingdom were only of this world, why did he not yield to the importunities of his followers, and accept temporal honors? It was because "his kingdom was not of this world" that he met rebuff and insult, and endured misappreciation. He lived in the future; the nerve to his spirit was the fact of the final triumph of his religion; he feared not death, and his words on the cross

should be our words when we are nigh to the great change, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

Many persons have supposed, and it appears to me erroneously, that the exclamation of our Saviour, "Oh! let this cup pass from me," betokened fear and distrust. It was the vision of the crucifixion, of the kind of death, of the nails in his hands, of the nails in his feet; but he immediately adds, "Not as I will, but as thou wilt."

Jesus is the resurrection and the life: by his annihilation of death, by his ascension from the grave, he has removed all sting from dissolution. As Peter and John ran to the tomb wherein the Saviour was laid, and found that he was not there, but had gone before them into Jerusalem, must not a deep sense of their immortality, and the mere nothingness of earthly existence compared with everlasting life, have flashed into their thoughts? Oh, may this fact of Christ's re-animation eradicate all fears of the tomb! Since the Redeemer has shown us what is beyond, let us not fear, but have perfect trust. Oh! let us cherish the delightful faith of him who said, "Sometimes, at the sight of a sublime scene, or a beautiful landscape, or a glorious sunset, first my feeling is delight; next it is worship, and then it is a presentiment of heaven, for I think to myself that this earth, at its loveliest, is hardly even the fore-court of the temple." Christ has arisen; Christ has ascended! Christians, death brings us into a close union with Christ. The blessing of Christ, as he left the world, is a proof that heaven is a blessed place. There is a narrow way that separates us from Christ; it is the stream of death. Every moment, some one of us is called over by the fiat of Omnipotence. Shall we hesitate to go, when called? Oh, no! Let us leap into the arms of Divine Mercy, and yield to God's commands. Let us show the good spirit of the great High Priest, our Lord, who said, "Even so, Father; for so it seems good in thy sight."

We come now to our second question, What should be the Christian's view of everlasting life?

Different views of heaven have been advanced; but speculations of this kind do not tend to hasten the revelation of truth. Heaven is differently phased, according to the degree of spirituality each soul has attained; but man will never have full knowledge till God removes the veil. We may use general terms

when speaking of heaven, saying, Heaven is a place of enjoyment. Whether it be a locality, it matters not, so long as complete happiness will be the award of faithful laborers. Heaven we may presume to be a place of constant growth: "they rest nor day nor night." "Ever onward" is the spiritual watchword. Heaven, we may hope, is a place of communion and recognition, where loved ones may meet and enjoy each other's society; and what a society is there! Our heavenly Father, our Saviour, Paul, James, John, all the saints, and the dear ones, gone before! "Oh!" says a writer, "this life which God has laid up in store for them that love him; this life, indeed! This happy, safe, and most lovely, — this holy life! This life which fears no death, which feels no sorrow, which knows no sin! This perfect life and harmony of souls! This day that never declines, — this light that never goes out. Think of its blisses and its glories, and so find some refreshment from the miseries and the toils of a perishing life." "I am the resurrection and the life." Yes, Christ is the resurrection and the life. Do we feel it? Does this truth strike to the very quick of our inner natures, and revive in us an ever-burning sense of infinite goodness and infinite love?

God grant us to have that resurrection! God grant us to enjoy that life!

"No sickness there,
No weary wasting of the frame away;
No fearful shrinking from the midnight air, —
No dread of Summer's bright and fervid ray!

No hidden grief,
No wild and cheerless vision of despair;
No vain petition for a swift relief, —
No tearful eyes, no broken hearts, are there.

No parted friends
O'er mournful recollections have to weep!
No bed of death-enduring love attends
To watch the coming of a pulseless sleep.

No blasted flower
Or withered bud celestial gardens know!
No scorching blast or fierce-descending shower
Scatter destruction like a ruthless foe!

No battle-word
Startles the host with fear and dread !
The song of peace creation's morning heard
Is rung wherever angels' minstrels tread.

Let us depart,
If home like this await the weary soul !
Look up, thou stricken one ! Thy wounded heart
Shall bleed no more at sorrow's stern control.

With faith our guide,
White-robed and innocent, to lead the way,
Why fear to plunge in Jordan's rolling tide,
And find the ocean of eternal day ?"

C. D. B.

RAMBLING NOTES.

I HAVE taken several pleasant summer excursions ; I have visited the glorious hills of the granite State, and watched the little rills as they gathered silently but surely their hidden strength, until they gushed forth from amidst the forest in their grandeur. I have watched the glorious sunsets on our "rock-bound shore," and seen at a distance the many vessels of many nations advance slowly, speaking so loudly of the peace and happiness of our loved land. And yet I do not think I have enjoyed any day better than one near the close of last autumn.

I had left the busy New England metropolis with a desire of enjoying nature, and of passing a few days with any old friends with whom I might chance to meet, so as once more to recall the memory of the past.

My first stopping-place was in the pleasant city of Portsmouth, where I had passed several of my youthful years, and with which I had many pleasant associations. Calling upon an old acquaintance, we walked out to view the improvements that had been made since I had left ; and he pointed out many dwellings, whose owners and occupants had, when children, not known where to obtain daily bread ; but had worked their ways up by honesty and industry, and had now become prosperous mechanics and ship-builders.

"But, my friend," I remarked, on observing that he approached his hospitable home, "there is yet one place where I expected you would take me, — 'God's Acre : ' we will yet go there."

After a short walk, we entered the silent abode of death : could it be that so many, many graves had been made there since I had left this city ?

The first monument, upon entering the cemetery, is a shaft of granite, bearing this inscription : —

“Erected by the South Parish, in memory of their late Pastor, Nathan Parker, D.D. Born June 5, 1782. Ordained Sept. 14, 1808. Died Nov. 8, 1833.”

A little to the right of this, I was attracted by a white marble cross ; and here, I found, lay the remains of Mr. Foster, whose sudden death all true friends of Sunday-schools so deeply mourn.

“Would,” observed my friend, “that it had been my privilege to have been with him at his parting hour ! for

‘To him it was not

So much even as the lifting of a latch ;

Only a step into the open air,

Out of a tent already luminous

With light that shone through its transparent walls !’

His faith was indeed almost sight, and a prayer from his lips lifted the soul to the felt presence of the Father. This monument has just been erected, and let us read the inscription : —

“Erected by the Portsmouth South Parish Sunday-school, in memory of John W. Foster, who for 34 years was their faithful Superintendent and devoted Christian friend and teacher. Born June 16, 1789. Died Jan. 10, 1852. — In simplicity and godly sincerity, by the grace of God, he had his conversation in the world.”

In passing to the south side, to read the latter part of the inscription, my eye was arrested by the words on an opposite monument : —

“Erected to the memory of Nath’l A. Haven, Jr. Born Jan. 14, 1790. Died June 3, 1826. By the Teachers of Sunday-schools in Massachusetts and Portsmouth. 1832. He was a disciple of him who ‘took little children in his arms, and blessed them.’”

What a consecrated place to contain the mortal remains of three such dear friends, Parker, Haven, Foster ? I felt bound to the spot, and could go no farther, though pleasant walks through this “garden of graves” presented themselves, adorned by the beauties of nature and art.

I well remembered the days I had passed in, that sabbath-school, and again heard the glowing words of prayer and exhortation from all at whose graves I now stood. Again I saw the mute sorrow which sat on every countenance, on that sabbath morning when we assembled, and the vacant seat indeed announced that our loved Haven was no more.

Again I listened to those thrilling, earnest tones to the lambs of the flock, telling them that the dear pastor and friend had gone forth to join the blessed assembly of the "just made perfect."

And could it be that after thirty-four years of usefulness, and of labors crowned with success, my other friend had "passed on"? But the words, "They are not *here*; they are risen," appeared to speak with far greater force than ever before. Oh, no! not *here*! "Behold where we have laid them;" and follow with the eye of faith, and see them, though parted for a season, yet now re-united with holier bonds, and, freed from the infirmities of the flesh, able to work ever nobly, lovingly, and faithfully in their Master's vineyard.

"Their works do follow them." The love which they have inspired in the hearts of so many, can it cease? No; for here was a visible proof, a wreath of *everlasting*, a withered bouquet, a collection of the gorgeous autumnal leaves on the mound, which had for its head-piece a scroll bearing the words, "J. W. F. Peace."

May the holy influence of these three friends ever rest upon the place of their earthly sojourn, and upon the community; and may their mantles so fall upon their surviving children, that it may be said of them as of Elisha of old, "The spirit of Elijah doth rest upon Elisha."

EDITOR'S COLLECTANEA. — No. 22.

Life of Mary L. Ware, by Rev. E. B. Hall. — The demand for this admirable memoir, in the market, has shown that it needs no commendations from the press to bring it into notice. To the best part of our community, the name of Ware is invested with

associations which make any fresh record, like this, very welcome; and the wife of Henry Ware was personally known to such a circle of appreciating and loving friends as would be sufficient of themselves to guaranty an extensive circulation of her Biography. To us the book has been doubly valuable, as not only a faithful and impressive portraiture of a noble example of Christian womanhood, but as reviving also some communion with that revered teacher and saintly man, her husband. We have heard many women speak of the effect of the volume as tending to create despair, — inasmuch as it presents so lofty and so efficient a form of female character. But one among many reasons why this ought not to be so, is the fact that there seems to have been no instance where Mrs. Ware struck out into any path of her own devising, to achieve great things. She simply, but faithfully, followed providential leadings, doing well what came to her hand to be done. If her lot was remarkable, she never tasked her brain to make it so. Her greatness was domestic. This, with the ardent piety of her soul, made her the extraordinary woman she was. Indeed, we should say that a more strictly practicable, and therefore encouraging, character is rarely found among eminent persons. The balance and harmony of her qualities were more signal than the originality and power of any one. What woman would not realize a lofty and pure success in life, whose heart was as full of devout trust and aspiration as her letters show hers to have been? With all this excellence, there was a single blemish; because, so far, her affections and her zeal wronged her judgment. When she sat up till two, or one, or twelve o'clock at night to write these letters, after fatiguing and incessant labors through the day, — as it appears she constantly did, — she transgressed divine laws, committing an error which even her beautiful and instructive correspondence does not wholly cancel. — The biographer has executed his delicate trust with much modesty and singular success.

A Memorial of Daniel Webster from the City of Boston. — In publishing this collection of valuable papers and speeches, Little and Brown have executed a volume of great typographical beauty. Mr. Hillard's Eulogy, which, besides its other merits as the production of a true scholar with a literary conscience, is free from the sins of ambition which have infected most of the eulogistic compositions, forms here the concluding part of a work of 272 pages.

Rev. A. A. Livermore's "*Sermon on the Christian Religion*" is a calm, vigorous statement of the grounds for faith in a religion supernaturally revealed. The discourse was occasioned by Rev. Theodore Parker's preaching in the author's pulpit, a short time

before. Mr. Parker lately said, in a sermon before his own congregation: —

"I do not believe there ever was a miracle, or ever will be; everywhere I find law the constant mode of operation of the infinite God. I do not believe in the miraculous inspiration of the Old Testament or the New Testament. I do not believe that the Old Testament was God's first word, nor the New Testament his last. The Scriptures are no finality to me. Inspiration is a perpetual fact. . . . I do not believe the miraculous origin of the Hebrew church, or the Buddhist church, or the Christian church, nor the miraculous character of Jesus. I take not the Bible for my master, nor yet the church; nor even Jesus of Nazareth for my master. I feel not at all bound to believe what the church says is true, nor what any writer in the Old or New Testament declares true; and I am ready to believe that Jesus taught, as I think, eternal torment, the existence of a devil, and that he himself should ere long come back in the clouds of heaven. I do not accept these things on his authority. I try all things by the human faculties."

Again, in speaking of Jesus, he says, —

"He is my best historic ideal of human greatness; not without errors, not without the stain of his times, and I presume, of course, not without sins; for men without sins exist in the dreams of girls, not in real fact: you never saw such a one, nor I, and we never shall."

"*To-Day*." — It is announced that the publication of the literary journal bearing this name has been discontinued. Our readers are generally aware that it was conducted by Mr. Charles Hale, one of the sons of Nathan Hale, Esq., so long and favorably known to this country as the editor of the Boston "*Daily Advertiser*." Both the hereditary talent and taste for journalism found expression in the little sheet, which, for a year or more, stood in its unpretending place, and said things so pleasantly in its own way. It is our belief, that, after the first few numbers, there was no column in its issues that our eyes did not at least glance over; and, in these days, that, we presume, is saying something in the way of commendation. But our object now is simply to advert to a striking feature of one of its departments, — the literary criticism. Is it not somewhat remarkable, that a newspaper which never fairly entered the lists for public distinction, but was quietly laid on a few parlor-tables weekly for the special entertainment of young persons, and edited by one of the youngest members of the editorial Body in the country, should have surpassed all our other periodicals, uniformly, in the dignity, the manly moderation, and so the judicial force, of its notices of books and men? We confess, we marked its course, in this regard, with surprise. The besetting and growing vice of our periodical style, tempting all of us in so many ways, "*To-Day*" escaped. We would not have believed so strong a charm could exist in the mere economy of commendatory adjectives. When shall we have a thoroughly independent and just

Review? Mr. Hale at present contributes, by his scholarship and talent, to the editorial strength of the "Advertiser."

Whether the following *Resolutions* ever passed into *actions* we are not informed. They furnish so good a suggestion of what *ought to be* in every neighborhood, that we copy them entire:—

"A communication having been addressed to the Congregational Association of New York and Brooklyn, by a respected brother in one of their churches, touching the too frequent want of fidelity among Christians, in the discharge of their obligations towards one another as well as towards the world; and also respecting the practicability and the desirableness of instituting, throughout the churches, small social circles-of-prayer, auxiliary to the larger and stated assemblies of the church, as at least a partial remedy for these evils and a safeguard against them,—the following *Resolutions* were, after discussion, unanimously adopted by the Association:—

"*Resolved*, That we view with deep concern the manifold and rapidly-increasing incitements to worldliness, and to the neglect of Christian duty, with which the present tendencies of society, especially in large cities, are surrounding Christians; and that we see, in the too frequent neglect of personal religious duty, and especially of personal effort on the part of private Christians for the conversion of men,—in the increasing want of the diligent and systematic religious training of children by their parents,—and in the prevalent though silent disposition to regard the ordinances of Christian worship rather as social and intellectual luxuries, to be enjoyed at pleasure, than as the necessary conditions of spiritual life, to be used intelligently, and to be made as universal as the light or the air,—signs of great and alarming peril to the cause of Christ, and of his kingdom among men.

"*Resolved*, further, That, nevertheless, the history of God's dealings with his churches in this vicinity during the last year, not less than the uniform and unquestionable tenor of his promises and instructions, gives assurance that he is more willing to bless his churches than they are to be blessed; and that he is able to gather to himself, out of all the wickedness of the world and the sluggishness of his people, the richest trophies of his truth and grace.

"*Resolved*, therefore, That it is affectionately recommended by this Association to all the pastors connected with it, to make a great and permanent revival of the Christian spirit and life throughout the churches to which they minister, the subject of instant and constant prayer, and of unwearied and hopeful endeavor, until God gives it.

"*Resolved*, also, That it is earnestly urged upon all Christian parents, both mothers and fathers, within the limits of this Association, that they should make it their first work, as it is their first and pre-eminent duty, to train their children daily and faithfully in the knowledge of Christ, and in submission to him; and it is as earnestly urged upon all Christian people, the members of our churches, that they should remember that these churches are to be 'lights in the world,' to be 'the salt of the earth;' that they should associate themselves, therefore, more freely in small assemblies, for conference and prayer, and for mutual guidance; that they should be punctual and unremitting in all private religious duties, of meditation, study, and secret prayer; and that they should labor more earnestly,—providing for such labor in the regular plans of their daily life, and devoting themselves to it as under the constant oversight of God,—for the awakening of men to the reality and the supreme importance of eternal things, and for the conversion of them to Christ and his truth.

"And so, may God show favor to our churches; renewing them by his grace, enriching them with the knowledge of his truth, enlarging steadily their numbers, and gathering all their members in his kingdom at last, 'in the day when he maketh up his jewels.'"